

sense of the 'nineties blandly saw democracy as a democracy of men. As such, however, great things were expected of it. With the new faith in progress went a new faith in government. Although it still dominated the minds of the official governing class, by the 'eighties and 'nineties, the Benthamite-Mill dispensation was wearing itself out. Herbert Spencer threw up a last rampart of Individualism, the more imposing at the time because it was so soon to be washed away. The scientific theory of environment co-operated with the humanitarian drift of feeling and the confident belief in knowledge as the instrument of progress to create an outlook among the younger generation to which Spencer's *The Man versus the State* was repulsive, if not absurd. Individualism, fatalist and essentially pessimist was beginning to be an uncomfortable strait-jacket for the new, scientific optimism. That optimism in its turn found its natural expression in various forms of collective action. So, it is to the new faith in ordered progress that one must refer both the steady march of social reform, legislation of various kinds, the growth of voluntary associations, like Trade Unions and Go-operative Societies, the steady extension of public provision by the provincial municipalities, and the rise of new political movements. The 1870 Education Act had made primary schooling compulsory, that of ten years later made it free, although it remained unorganised on any national plan. Factory

and Public Health legislation made great
inroads on the
presumed right of the individual to "do as he
likes with
his own", the notion of a minimum social code
began to
dawn on many minds In the field of local
government,
in cities like Birmingham, Bradford and
Glasgow, to name
only these, collective provision to meet citizen
needs was
going ahead fast, if not as yet in London
Radicalism, in
Birmingham, threw up a veritable hero in
Joseph Chamber-
lain and Chamberlain, with his "home town"
achievements